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Alcuin Club Tracts
VII

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS IN THE WESTERN LITURGIES . .

BY THE REV.
ERNEST BERESFORD-COOKE

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
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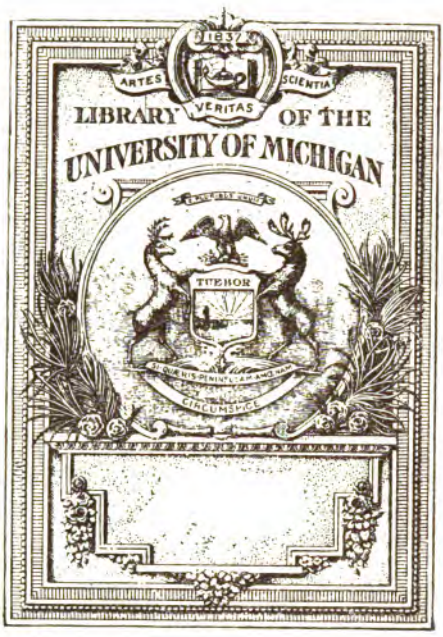
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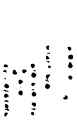

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PREFACE

It has been the writer's endeavour, in the following pages, to consider some of the more important features which disclose themselves upon an examination of the use of the Sign of the Cross in the Western Liturgies, and especially in the canon of the mass.

No attempt has been made at anything like a complete account of this ceremony. To do so would obviously have been quite beyond the scope of an Alcuin Club tract.

What has been written, however, is published in the hope that it may do something towards making the use and purpose of this sacred gesture more intelligible to those who may not have been able to give to this subject the attention which it deserves. It will be noticed that the reader's attention has been especially called to (1) the extension of the celebrant's arms *in modum Crucis*, while pleading the merits of our Saviour's death and passion, to (2) the use of the sign of the cross in consecration and (3) to the "signings" over the already consecrated elements—the host and chalice,—such a prominent ritual feature in the Western canon of the mass. In regard to the first question, it has been the writer's wish to call attention to the almost universal prevalence of this ceremony in the Western Church. So far as the last is concerned, it is his belief that he has pointed out some grave reasons why the practice of signing the already consecrated elements should be regarded as a liturgical anomaly.

When the question of a greater restriction in the use of the sign of the cross, in benediction of the elements, is touched upon, the writer realises that there is perhaps room for a difference of opinion among members of the Anglican Church as to how far such restriction should be carried.

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But, however this may be, to multiply the signings as is sometimes done, even by Anglican priests, appears to many minds to take away much of the meaning of that ceremonial action.

Mr. Edmund Bishop has stated in his interesting tract, "The genius of the Roman Rite," that two distinctive marks of the ancient Roman liturgy were "sobriety and sense." Would it not be well that this rule should be applied to the Anglican liturgy as regards the matter considered in these notes? Moreover, a ceremony that needs so much explaining as some of the crosses made in the canon of the mass require, ceases to have any ritual value.

It ceases to be intelligible, and therefore to be a reality. The great value of a ceremonial action consists in its giving expression to some ritual principle: and if it can be said of any ceremony what has frequently been said, with much show of justice, of the crosses made in the canon after the words of consecration have been spoken, the *raison d'être* of that ceremony disappears. At least this is how the question appears to the view of the present writer, and as such he submits it to the reader's thoughtful consideration. I have also dealt briefly with some other uses of the sign of the cross during the mass, including the blessing of persons and incense, and have said a few words on the manner of making the sign. But I have merely glanced at the signings made at the offertory and have not attempted to deal with those connected with the embolismus, the commixture or the pax, the treatment of which would have overrun the limits of a short tract and must be reserved for another occasion.

It remains now to express my grateful thanks to Rev. H. A. Wilson, of Magdalen College, Oxford, for his great kindness in giving me some information, out of the abundant store possessed by him, concerning the use of the sign of the cross in the early MS. Sacramentaries of the Western Church. I have made free use of that information in the text of this tract.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS IN THE WESTERN LITURGIES

THE EXTENSION OF THE CELEBRANT'S ARMS, IN *MODUM CRUCIS*

This sacred ceremony has, of course, a primary reference to the position of our Lord's arms during the time of His crucifixion. It dates back, however, to earlier times. Thus, St. Justin Martyr refers to the extended arms of Moses while the Israelites were fighting against the Amalekites, as a type of the Cross.

Tertullian speaks of the Christians of his time not only raising their hands in prayer, but also extending them.[1]

Minucius Felix speaks of praying with the hands extended, and says that they worshipped God with a pure mind, and their hands stretched forth in the form of a cross: "Crucis signum est, cum homo porrectis manibus Deum pura mente veneratur."[2] Paulinus describes St. Ambrose praying to God while he was dying, with his hands spread out in the form of a cross: "Ab hora undecima diei usque ad illam horam qua emisit Spiritum, expansis manibus in modum crucis orabat."[3] We learn from Eusebius that the Emperor Constantine had his own image impressed upon his golden medals, in which he is depicted stretching forth his hands to God.[4]

[1] *De Orat.* cap. 11.
[2] *Dialogus &c.* Oxford, 1678 p. 90.
[3] Paulinus Mediolanensis, *Vita Ambrosii*, p. 12.
[4] *Vita Constantini*, lib. 4. cap. 15.

A similiar reference is made to this custom by many another early writer. It was natural, therefore, that this posture of the celebrant should have been widely adopted to symbolise the pleading of Christ's death and passion during the prayer *Unde et memores* in the canon of the mass. Durandus, writing in the 13th Century, speaks of this custom in such terms as to prove that it evidently was well established in his day. "Sacerdos igitur hoc repraesentans, dicendo tam beatae passionis, manus in modum crucis extendit, ut habitu corporis manuumque Christi extensionem in cruce repraesentet," &c.[1]

In France this custom was held in great repute. Grancolas says that at the prayer *Unde et memores* the priest extends his arms in the form of a cross, thus representing the extension of Jesus Christ's hands upon the cross, and refers to Gabriel Biel in support of his statement.[2]

Claude de Vert is a strong supporter of the custom. He says, "at the word *passionis*, of the prayer *Unde et memores*, he, the priest, extends his arms in the form of a cross, to signify that of our Saviour, the principal instrument of his passion."[3]

The priest, he says, makes an express memory of the passion of our Lord by this gesture. De Vert quotes Nicolas Plova, Durandus, Gavantus, Scortia, Suarez, and Gabriel Biel, as testifying to the custom and its import. Speaking of the modern Roman rubric, De Vert admits that it does not positively order that the gesture must be made "en form de Croix," but it says nothing, he contends, to the contrary, and he cites the missals of 1537, 1553, and 1555, as containing the following rubric *extensis aliquantulum brachiis*. He tells us that the the missal of 1551 ordered that *In oratione*, Unde et memores, *ubi specialis fit commemoratio* Passionis, *aliquanto fiat prolixior distensio brachiorum;* and that another missal of 1559 reads *brachia aliquantulum*

[1] *Rat. Div. Off.* iv. cap. xliii, Lyons, 1592, p. 338.
[2] *Traité de la messe et de l'office Divin*, Paris, 1714, p. 136.
[3] *Explication des cérémonies de l'Eglise*, Paris, 1720, t. i. pp. 237-8.

extendit ad modum crucis. Also the missal of the Dominicans has, *extendit brachia plus solito*, and the same custom is observed by the Carthusians and the Carmelites; the ordinary of the former reading *elevat et expansas tenet manus in modum crucifixi;* the rubric in the missal being "*expansis brachiis et manibus dicit*, Unde et memores."[1]

De Vert refers to some who seem to have thought it improper to extend the hands, after consecration, outside the corporal, and thinks that this may have been the reason why in certain missals the rubric requires the hands to be extended before the breast; but his remarks concerning the "rubricaire" who framed the rubric *extensis brachiis ante pectus*, are certainly not very flattering; and he adds that before the time of Pius V. the Roman missals—among others, that of 1540—simply ordered the extension of the arms, *extensis brachiis*, without the restriction, *ante pectus.*[2] De Moleon says that at Orleans the priest has his arms extended in the form of a cross, in saying *Unde et memores*, as many monastic orders do.[3]

The same ceremony is prescribed by the rubrics of the Ambrosian Missal, "*extensis brachiis in modum crucis, dicit* Unde et."[4] In the Dutch tract called "Dat Boexken van der Missen," there is a woodcut showing the celebrant standing with his arms spread out *in modum crucis*, at the prayer *Unde et memores*, and the explanation given in the text is, "How the priest, after the elevation, stands with his arms stretched out like a cross, praying for the people;" though, as the editor of the tract has remarked, "praying for the people" is not a very accurate description of the prayer *Unde et Memores.*[5]

In a tract containing directions for saying mass, called "Indutus Planeta," which is found in several editions of the Roman Missal printed chiefly in France

[1] *Ib. ut supra*, pp. 238-9.
[2] *Ib.* p. 240.
[3] *Voyages Liturgiques de France*, Paris, 1757.
[4] *Missale Ambrosianum*, Milan, 1902.
[5] *The Booklet of the Mass;* Alcuin Club Collections, V. p. 91.

between 1507 and 1546 the same gesture is ordered:— "*Deinde deposito calice dicit* Unde et Memores *extensis brachiis aliquantulum in modum crucis ut predictum est.*"[1] There is another direction in the same Tract differing slightly from that cited above. As is well known, the present Roman Missal excludes this significant gesture by the terms of its rubrics, "*extensis manibus ante pectus dicit secreto*, Unde et Memores." In the canon of the Utrecht Missal of 1540, the following rubric occurs immediately after the consecration of the chalice: "*Reposito calice extendat brachia in modum crucis: et dicat* Unde et memores," &c.[2] When we come to our own country, we find the custom of extending the arms in this manner, to be the rule. Every edition of the Sarum and Hereford uses, and all the known MSS. of the York use, direct this spreading out of the priest's arms *in modum crucis*, at the prayer *Unde et memores*. The Sarum rubric is, *deinde elevet brachia sua in modum crucis, junctis digitis, usque ad haec verba*, de tuis donis ac datis."[3]

The rubric of the Bangor Missal reads, *elevet brachia sua, extendendo in modum crucis.*" That of Hereford, "*extendat brachia in modum crucifixi.*"[4] In all the known MSS. of the York Missal the same action is prescribed, "*elevet brachia in modum crucis junctis digitis usque ad haec verba* de tuis donis et datis, *ita dicens* Unde et memores," &c.[5] In the printed missal of the York use, however, the direction is not given; possibly, as Canon Simmons has suggested, from a desire to conform to the use of Rome, through a jealousy of the preponderance of the see of Canterbury.[6]

In that metrical instruction for hearing mass, called the Lay Folks Mass-Book, which was written originally in the French language somewhere about 1170, and

[1] *Tracts on the Mass*, ed. Dr. J. Wickham Legg, Henry Bradshaw Society.
[2] Cited in *The Booklet of the Mass*, p. 151.
[3] *Missale Sarum*, ed. Dickinson, 1861-83, col. 617.
[4] W. Maskell, *Ancient Liturgies in the Church of England*, London, 1846, p. 96.
[5] *Missale Eboracense*, ed. Henderson, 1874, vol. 1 p. 186.
[6] *The Lay Folks Mass-Book*, ed. Simmons, 1879, p. 289.

translated into English about a hundred years later, we find the custom we are considering alluded to.

"After, the prest · his armes spredes he
In toknynge · he dyed vppon the tre
For me · and al mon-kunne."[1]

That this ceremony of the priest's spreading abroad his arms during the pleading of Christ's passion was the general custom in England at the close of the reign of King Henry VIII we may infer from the "Book of Ceremonies" put forth at that time. In the portion that treats on the "Ceremonies used in the Mass," the following words occur:—"After the which (i.e. the elevation) the Priest extendeth and stretcheth abroad his armes in form of a cross; declaring thereby, that according to Christ's commandment, both he and the people not only have the fresh remembrance of his passion, but also of his resurrection and glorious ascension," &c.[2]

The same rule seems to have been observed in Scotland. In the Arbuthnott Missal, the rubric reads, "*elevet brachia in modum crucis, junctis digitis usque ad haec verba* de tuis donis ac datis, *ita dicens*, Unde," &c.[3]

It is strange that a gesture, for which there is so much ancient authority, and which has, as we have seen, such a direct reference to the Sacrifice of the Cross, should have been so obnoxious to the protestant party in the 16th Century; and our wonder is increased when we remember that the ceremony in question was one of the features in which our own service books differed from those of the Roman Church. The fact is, that this ceremonial custom is so wide spread, one may say, that the Roman rubric stands almost alone, if not quite alone, in directing that the priest's hands must be held before his breast, whilst saying the first portion of the *Unde et memores*. Thus, a custom which was in use throughout this island, and a large portion of the Continent of Europe, is one which it would be well that our clergy should retain and have in use to-day.

[1] *Ib. u.s.* p. 144.
[2] Strype, *Eccles: Memorials*, vol. 1. pt 2. pp. 424-5, Oxford, 1822.
[3] *Liber Ecclesie . . . de Arbuthnott*, Burntisland, 1864, p. 160.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS IN BLESSING THE EUCHARISTIC ELEMENTS

This use of the Sign of the Cross is very ancient; and is frequently referred to by the early Christian writers. St. Cyprian states that it is the authoritative use of the sign of the cross which works the effect in all the Sacraments.[1] St. Augustine says that "unless the sign of the cross is made on the foreheads of the faithful, or on the water itself wherewith they are regenerated, or on the oil with which they are anointed with chrism, *or on the sacrifice with which they are nourished*, none of these things is duly performed."[2] Ives, Bishop of Chartres, makes a similar observation, and says that it is in virtue of the sign of the cross that all the sacraments find their perfection: "et universaliter omnia ecclesiastica sacramenta in hujus virtute perficiuntur."[3] St. Chrysostom also testifies to its use in the eucharistic service.

In the Sacramentary of Leo there are no rubrics; but, as is well known, the book as we now have it, is defective, and it is impossible to say what the missing portion might have contained. The earliest MSS. of the canon of the mass, show, so far as can be judged from their indication of crosses, some variety of practice. The *Missale Francorum*, I believe, marks no crosses at all. The Gelasian Sacramentary (Reginae 316) marks five in the *Te igitur*, and none after that point.

[1] *de Pass. Christi.*
[2] *Hom:* cxviii. in 5. Joan: xix. 24.
[3] *Serm. quare Deus natus et passus fit. In append.*

The *Sacramentarium Gallicanum* (Neale and Forbes' *Missale Vesontionense*) which is very likely earlier than either, marks one in *Te igitur*, five in *Quam oblationem* (including one before the first word: there is no cross at *ratam*) two in the recital of the words of Institution, three in *Unde et memores* (there is no cross at *calicem*) and four in *Per quem haec omnia* (including one at *saeculorum*).

Of the two MSS. of the "later Gelasian" type, which he has examined, Mr. H. A. Wilson informs me that the Rheinau MS. has no crosses; the S. Gallen MS. shows three in *Te igitur*, five in *Quam oblationem*, two in the recital of the Institution, four in *Unde et memores*, which are only outlined in ink, not coloured. Of these two MSS., the Rheinau is perhaps as early as 775: the other is of about 800. The absence of crosses in the *Missale Francorum* and the Rheinau MS. must not, however, be supposed to imply that the sign of the cross was not used; and it is perhaps not safe to infer that the absence of crosses in the latter part of the canon in Reginae, 316[1] shows that the sign was not meant to be made at later points. But the positive evidence of the Bobbio MS. (*Sacramentarium Gallicanum*) shows the use of the sign at *Per quem haec omnia*: the use of gold for the crosses at this point in the S. Gallen MS. makes it unlikely that these crosses are a later addition. Mr. H. A. Wilson tells me that he thinks that the cross at *calicem* probably is so, and that the crosses in green may be so, though it seems most likely that they are original or contemporary with the original hand. The Stowe MS.[2] is a document of a rather uncertain date, probably not so early as any of the MSS. referred to above; but its text of the canon is certainly of an earlier type. It has four crosses in *Per quem haec omnia*, and only one before that point, viz., after *benedictam* in *Quam oblationem*.[3] So far as I can discover the earliest *literary* evidence of the insistance of any definite rule as to the number and

[1] *Gelasian Sacramentary*, ed. H. A. Wilson, Oxford, 1894.

[2] F. E. Warren, *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church*, Oxford, 1881.

[3] *Ib.* pp. 236, 241.

position of the signs in the canon is in a letter of Pope Zacharias to St. Boniface. This shows (1) that Boniface had some doubt as to the proper usage, and (2) that Zacharias resolved his doubt by sending him a copy of the canon on which he had marked, or caused to be marked, an indication of the sign at the places where it ought to be made according to the Roman usage of the time. It seems likely that the ordinary Roman practice was not to mark the sign in MSS., and that the insertion of the crosses was an exceptional thing to meet Boniface's question.[1] As to the occasion of the question, there seems to be no evidence beyond the fact that some other matter in the letter indicates that Boniface had been considering some points in which the Gallican usage differed from his own. Scudamore dates this letter "about the year 740;"[2] but Jaffé, I believe, considers it to have been written in 751. The precise date, however, is not very material, since in any case the earliest MSS. of the *canon missae* go back beyond it. In *Ordo Romanus* I, the greater part of which is at least as old as the time of St. Gregory the Great, there are three places in which the sign of the cross is referred to, so far as our present purpose is concerned. First, during the preparation of the oblations, we read that "the subdeacon attendant goes down into the choir, receives a ewer of water from the hand of the ruler of the choir and brings it back to the Archdeacon, who pours it into the chalice, making a cross as he does so (infundit faciens crucem in calice.") The second place occurs at the *Sancta* and kiss of peace: "When the pontiff says *The Peace of the Lord be with you always*, he makes a cross with his hand thrice over the chalice, and drops a consecrated fragment into it." This fragment has been reserved from the last solemn mass. The third signing referred to is a variant of the second, and takes place when a stational mass is celebrated by another bishop instead of the pope: "When *The Peace of the Lord be with you always* ought to be said, the subdeacon oblationer brings

[1] *Ep. Zach.* xii., *Conc. Labb.* t. vi. col. 1527.
[2] *Notitia Eucharistica* p. 597 ed. 1876.

a fragment of the *Fermentum*, which has been hallowed by the pope (ab apostolico consecratum est), and gives it to the archdeacon, and he offers it to the bishop, who making the sign of the cross with it thrice as he says, *The peace of the Lord be with you always*, drops it into the chalice."[1]

The next *Ordo Romanus* states that "six sets of crosses are observed in the canon." The *Ordo* gives their places, but does not state how many are employed in each place.[2] Reasons of a mystical import have been given for this rule, viz., that God created the world in six days.

In the Ambrosian Sacramentary which Muratori printed in his *Liturgia Romana Vetus*[3] and which is believed to belong to the ninth or tenth century, the sign occurs three times at the beginning of *Te igitur;* thrice at the Invocation; only once, viz., at the first *He blessed* in the recital of the Institution, and twice at the final ascription of praise. In the Mozarabic Missal, the sign of the cross is made three times in that part of the "Omnium Offerentium" which comes before the words of Institution viz., at the Offertory. "*Et dum cantatur Sacrificium, offerat hostiam, et calicem cum orationibus, quae sequuntur. Oratio.* Acceptabilis. . . . haec oblatio. . . . .In nomine Pa✠tris, &c. *Dimittendo patenam super corporales. Deinde accipiat calicem sanctificando sic.* In nomine Pa✠tris. . . . Amen. . . . *Hic accipiat aquam in manibus, et dicat silentio super oblationem cum tribus digitis.* In nomine Patris ✠ et Filii. . . . amen." In the prayer "Adesto" the sign is made three times: "et sancti✠fica hanc oblationem ✠ ut sanctificata ✠ sumamus per manus sancti Angeli tui, &c." In the recital of the Institution, the sign is made over the host at "bene✠dixit," and then at the words "in meam ✠ commemorationem." At the consecration of the chalice "Hic est ✠ calix . . . in meam commemorationem. . . . in claritatem ✠ de cælis." In the prayer

[1] *Ordo Romanus* I., ed. Cuthbert Atchley, London, 1905, pp. 136, 139, 147.
[2] *Museum Italicum*, t. ii. p. 48.
[3] *Ib.* t. i. col. 131.

"Post Pridie," which sometimes contains an Invocation of the Holy Spirit similar to that in the Eastern Rites, the sign is made four times, at the words "sancti✠ficas, vivificas ✠ bene✠dicis ✠ ac praestas nobis, &c."[1] In the canon of the first printed edition of the Roman Missal[2] the sign is made three times in the prayer *Te igitur*; five times at *Quam oblationem*; twice in *Qui pridie* at the words *benedixit*; five times at *Unde et memores*; thrice at *Supplices te rogamus*; nine times at *Per quem haec omnia.* It also occurs three times at the *Pax domini sit, &c.*, the rubric reading, *Hic facit signum crucis super sanguinem dicens.* In the *ordinarium missae*, there is a cross in the prayer Veni Sanctificator, at the word *Benedic*; the rubric reading *Sequitur oratio super hostiam et calicem cum signo crucis.* The Sarum and York Missals have the same number of crosses in the various prayers of the canon as the Roman Missal just referred to, save that in the latter there is one cross more in the prayer *Per quem* after the word *gloria.*[3] It is true that in some of the MSS. collated by the editor of the York Missal, the number of crosses varies to a certain extent; in one MS. there are no crosses marked in the canon; but there is no reason to think that the crosses were not used in practice, considering the date of these MSS.

In the First Prayer Book of Edward VI., the sign of the cross is made twice over the bread and wine at the Invocation:—"Vouchsafe to bl✠esse and sanc✠tifie these thy gyfts, and creatures of bread and wyne,"[4] etc.

In the Nonjurors' Communion Office of 1718 the sign of the cross is made once over the bread and once over the wine during the recital of the words of Institution, thus:

"Take, eat, THIS IS MY BO✠DY which is given for you. . . . . THIS IS MY BLO✠OD, of the New Testament,

[1] *Missale Mozarabicum*, Rome, 1804.
[2] *Missale Romanum*, Mediolani, 1474, ed. Dr. Lippe, H.B.S. 1899.
[3] *Missale Sarum*, u.s., col. 539; *Missale Eboracense*, u.s.
[4] *The booke of the common prayer*, 1549.

etc." At the Invocation which, of course, follows the words of Institution and the Oblation, the rubric directs that the priest shall lay his hand upon the bread at the words, "Make this bread the Body of thy Christ;" and upon every vessel (be it chalice or flagon) in which there is any wine and water, at the words, "And this cup the Blood of thy Christ."[1]

In "The Holy Liturgy" contained in the nonjuring bishop Thomas Deacon's book of devotions, 1734, there is no direction to make the sign of the cross during the recital of the words of Institution, but at the Invocation of the Holy Spirit the prayer reads as follows: "And send down thine Holy Spirit, the witness of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, upon this sacrifice, that he may make *Here the Priest is to lay his hands upon all the bread* this Bread the Bo✠dy *And here to make the sign of the cross over all the bread* of thy Christ, and *And here to lay his hands upon the cup and upon every vessel on the Altar, in which there is any wine and water*, this cup the Blo✠od *And here to make the sign of the cross over the cup and over every vessel on the Altar, in which there is any wine and water* of thy Christ, etc.[2]

In the Communion Service of the Book of Common Prayer now in use in the Church of England, there is no direction to make the sign of the cross at all. But, as we have seen, the same may be said of some mediæval MS. missals; at least "MS. A," collated by Dr. Henderson for his edition of the York Missal omits all crosses throughout the canon. That no crosses were made by the priests who used this missal, is of course, unthinkable.

I suppose the most that can be said on this matter is, that the present English Communion Office does not *command* the priests who use it to make the sign of the

[1] *A Communion Office Taken partly from Primitive Liturgies and partly from the First English Reformed Common Prayer Book*, London, 1718.

[2] *A compleat collection of devotions both publick and private: taken from the Apostolical Constitutions, the Ancient Liturgies, and the Common Prayer Book of the Church of England*, London: Printed for the Author: 1734.

cross; neither does it forbid the sacred gesture. Such being the case, what should be the rule of those who believe with St. Austin, that unless the sign is made in the celebration of this Sacrament, he who celebrates "does not do well?"

I cannot help thinking that, first of all, the judgment of Charles Wheatly will commend itself to many minds, upon a review of the whole question, namely, that, "Such a number of crossings as the Roman Missal enjoins, renders the service theatrical . . . . but one or two we always find (in all our liturgies). So much having been thought proper, in this solemn occasion, to testify that we are not ashamed of the Cross of Christ, and that the solemn service we are then about is performed in honour of a crucified Saviour. And therefore as the Church of England has thought fit to retain this ceremony in the ministration of one of her sacraments, I see not why she should lay it aside in the ministration of the other. For that may very well be applied to it in the ministration of the Eucharist, which the Church herself has declared of the Cross in Baptism (Can. 30. A.D. 1603) *viz. That it was held in the Primitive Church as well by the Greeks as the Latins, with one Consent, and great applause: at what time, if any had opposed themselves against it, they would certainly have been censured as enemies of the name of the Cross, and consequently of Christ's merits the sign whereof they could no better endure.*"[1]

So far as regards the restriction of the number of "crossings," recommended by Wheatly, is concerned, it should be remembered that long before his time, the same thing had been advocated by Amalarius:

"It seems to me that if the sign of the cross were made once over the bread and wine it would be enough, because the Lord was crucified once."[2]

To multiply the number of crossings to the extent that we find in the mediæval missals of the West, appears to take away much of the meaning of this action. To the present writer it seems very like the way in which

[1] *A Rational Illustration of the B. of C. P.* London, 1825, p. 306.
[2] *Lib.* iii. 31.

a certain class of "High church" folks, some thirty years ago, persisted in putting crosses on every article of church furniture, till that sacred emblem lost all vital association, and became a mere "ornament" in the modern sense of the word. In one of our Scottish cathedrals there may be seen to-day an example of the same want of proportion in this matter. Behind the high altar, there is a stone reredos, the entral portion of which consists of a large marble cross, at the foot of which a smaller cross of brass is placed. The same thing may be seen in many other churches. Indeed, there may sometimes be noticed, in addition to a cross or crucifix in the reredos, and a second upon the altar, one in the central light of the east window, and another upon the altar frontal. In such cases a sense of the right proportion of things seems needed. But whatever may be thought of the great number of "signings" in the earlier portion of the Western canon, a still graver question is involved in the signings which occur over the consecrated host and chalice.

There can, I think, be no doubt, that the original meaning of this sign was benedictory: that to sign and to bless meant the same thing, and conveyed the same idea. If this be so, a difficulty of no small magnitude presents itself when we come to consider the post-consecration signings which we meet with in the canon of the mass. This difficulty has been felt by many ritualists, Roman as well as Anglican; and the editors of that Anglo-Roman book known as "A Catholic Dictionary" have thus expressed their opinions: "It is natural that the Church, accustomed to bless everything with the sign of the Cross, should so bless the unconsecrated bread and wine, but it is surprising at first sight that the sign of the Cross should be frequently made over the body and blood of Christ. Many explanations have been given, but the truth seems to be that no single explanation meets all the difficulties, and that the sign of the Cross is made over the consecrated species for several reasons. Usually the rite is meant to indicate the blessing which flows forth from the body and blood of

Christ. At the words, 'Through whom, O Lord, thou dost ever create all these good things, sanctifiest them, givest them life, blessest them and bestowest them on us.' The signs of the Cross were originally meant to be made over the *Eulogia* or blessed bread placed on the altar and then given to those who did not communicate. Lastly the signs of the Cross made with the Host at the words, 'Through Him, and with Him, and in Him, is unto Thee, God the Father Almighty in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honour and glory,' probably arose from the custom of making the sign of the Cross in naming the persons of the Trinity."[1]

The difficulty referred to by the two writers quoted above, has been felt by many others of the same communion. Claude de Vert, for example, has a long dissertation on this subject in his learned treatise, "Explication des Cérémonies de l'Eglise," (t. 1, *Chap. III*). De Vert tries his best to save the situation by a distinction between signing with the cross in benediction, and making the sign as a "simple gesture," though he admits that the origin of the sign is benedictory. In a note (t. 1, p. 190) he quotes with what appears to be approval, the opinion of Bossuet, bishop of Meaux.

"Feu M. l'Evêque de Meaux, en son *explication de la messe* p. 268, laisse la liberté de penser que les *bénédictions* qu' on fait sur le corps de J. C. avec des croix, ne concernent par ce divin corps. 'Et il y auroit en effet de l'absurdité à croire autrement (comme dit Estienne d'Autun en son *Traité du Sacrement de l'Autel*, c. 17), et à s'imaginer que ces Signes allassent à benir et à sanctifier celui qui est la source de toute bénédiction et de toute sanctification, and qui même nous a donné à tous de sa plenitude: *Oblata non benedicit, ut eum, à quo est omnis sanctificatio, vel de cujus plenitudine omnes nos accepimus, sanctificet; esset enim absurdum.*'"[2] To bless, then, Him who is the Source of all benediction, is an absurdity in the view of this writer. De Vert, however, supposes that the

[1] Addis and Arnold, *A Catholic Dictionary*, London, 1884, p. 236.
[2] *Explication des cérémonies de l'Eglise*, Paris, 1720, t. 1. p. 190.

signs of the cross made over the consecrated elements are not intended to be benedictory, but merely gestures which have come to be connected with certain words, "En un mot, les Signes de Croix suivent simplement icy les expressions d' *Hostie*, de *Pain*, de *Calice*, de *Corps* et de *Sang*, sans autre rapport au Corps et au Sang de Jesus Christ, que d'être faits sur ces sacrez Symboles plutôt qu' ailleurs, par la détermination des expressions même, ausquelles, pour les raisons marquées plus haut, ces signes se trouvent reguliérement attachez."[1]

In regard to the crosses made at the clause *Per quem*, De Vert admits that they were anciently used for the benediction of the fruits of the earth which were placed on the altar at that moment of the sacred action.[2]

They are now used simply as actions agreeable to the imports of the expressions, *sanctificas* ✠, *vivificas* ✠, et *bene*✠*dicis*, and to be classed with the crossings made at the end of the *Gloria in excelsis*, with those made at the clause, *Per* ✠ *ipsum and cum* ✠ *ipso and in* ✠ *ipso, est tibi Deo Patri* ✠ *omnipotenti, in unitate Spiritus* ✠ *sancti*, and again at the *Gloria patri* at the end of the Psalms in places where the sign is made there. These places in the canon containing nothing more than simple acts of praise and thanksgiving, the signs of the cross which are joined to the words should be considered as merely gestures agreeable to the name of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, and not as prayers or benedictions.[3]

But that which, in De Vert's opinion, quite decides that these words, *Per quem haec omnia domine semper bona creas*, do not refer in their original signification to the body or blood of Christ, is that "these good things" which are spoken of are said to be created, vivified, and sanctified by Jesus Christ, *Per quem* (Christum) *haec omnia domine semper bona creas, sanctificas, vivificas, benedicis, &c.* Therefore, if these "good things" are nothing else than the body and blood of Jesus Christ

[1] *Ib.* p. 190.
[2] *Ib.* p. 191.
[3] *Ib.* pp. 191-2.

Himself, in a word, Jesus Christ Himself, it is as much as to say that Jesus Christ is created, sanctified, vivified, and blessed by Himself. *Per quem* (Christum) *haec omnia Domine semper bona (corpus et sanguinem Christi, Christum) creas, sanctificas, vivificas, benedicis, &c.* As if Jesus Christ could ever be the same thing that is created by Him! De Vert then proceeds to show that the words referred to the fruits of the earth, and their reference to Christ is understood when we bear in mind the saying in St. John's Gospel, that by Him all things were made, and without Him nothing was made that was made. That the words in question have nothing to do, in their first intention, with the sacred elements (les Sacrez Symboles) may be seen from the fact that they appear in benedictions which are made sometimes out of the time of mass, in the case of the new beans or grapes, referred to in the Gelasian Sacramentary, *Benedic, Domine, hos fructus novos uvae sive fabae. . . In nomine domini nostri Jesu Christi, Per quem haec omnia domine semper bona creas.* This being done outside the *canon missae*, it certainly cannot have any connection with, or refer to, the host or the chalice.[1]

If, then, the original signification of the sign of the cross was, as De Vert maintains, "un priere ou bénédiction abregée," made at the clause *Per quem* over the new fruits of the earth which used to be blessed at that liturgical moment, it is easy to see that the signs being now made over the host and chalice present a great difficulty, which all the dialectical skill of Dom Claude is scarcely able to overcome.

I cannot think that De Vert's attempt to reconcile the present use of these signs over the host or chalice is satisfactory as an explanation of the facts. It is, I think, quite possible that the use of the sign is sometimes due merely to its association with certain words, or to a tendency to make the sign merely demonstrative: but it is difficult to bring oneself to believe that such a merely otiose use would have been so generally established, or

[1] *Ib.*, t. 4. pp. 246-8.

have been regarded as so important as to be recognised by indications which are practically rubrics in the early MSS. of the *canon missae*.

To speak of "simple gestures," having no benedictory import, is obviously an after thought to save the situation. At a time when the blessing of the new grapes, &c., took place during the clause *Per quem*, there was an obvious meaning in the crosses that were made: to make the signs over the consecrated elements, and to apply words originally intended to refer to mere fruits of the earth to the blessed sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, is a difficulty which the theory of De Vert is unequal to solve. The same difficulty has been perceived by another learned French ritualist, J. Grancolas. In his "Traité de la Messe et de l'office Divin,"[1] this writer asks the question "why the signs of the cross are made over the symbols after their consecration?" And he quotes Stephen of Autun, who writes of the absurdity of thinking that these signs are intended as benedictions of Him who is the source of all benediction. He also quotes St. Thomas as saying, "Non quod eum qui praesens est sanctum sanctorum sanctificemus," and says that the Jesuit Maldonatus in his treatise on the ceremonies of the mass, disapproves these signs of the cross after consecration. Grancolas maintains that the signs of the cross which the priest makes over the host and chalice are merely intended to signify that he speaks of Jesus Christ crucified.

"Je dis donc que les signes de croix que fait le Prêtre sur l'hostie and sur le calice après la consécration, ne font que pour marquer plus particulierement qu'il parle de Jesus Christ crucifié. Comme le sacrifice est le mémorial de sa mort, on expreme la croix ou son crucifiement toutes les fois qu'on parle de lui; *Hostiam* puram, ✠ hostiam sanctam, &c."

Concerning the clause *Per quem*, the same writer says that the words *ces biens* are not to be understood as applying to the consecrated elements, for the same reasons already cited from De Vert; but he reminds his

[1] pp. 134-5.

readers that that prayer was formerly said over the new fruits which were placed upon the altar at the end of the canon to be blessed; that the signs were used in blessing the oil for the sick on Maundy Thursday, and that in certain places it was by that prayer and at that time that the bread was blessed which was distributed every Sunday to the faithful, and therefore the benedictions which are made in saying that prayer have respect to the things which are blessed at that time, and not to the host or the chalice."[1]

Another point well worthy of consideration, when dealing with this subject, is the fact that at the time when the use of the Sign was becoming more or less fixed, the theory of consecration was as yet not so fixed as it afterwards became; I mean that the question at what moment in the course of the canon it could be said that the gifts were consecrated;—whether at the words of Institution, or at the end of the *Supplices te rogamus*, or at the end of whole *Actio*, was probably not clearly present to the minds of the persons whose practice determined the use the sign. As Mgr. Duchesne has pointed out, there is good reason to believe that the prayer *Supplices te rogamus* is the Western equivalent of the Eastern *epiclesis*: "This prayer," he says, "is far from exhibiting the precision of the Greek formularies, in which there is a specific mention of the grace prayed for—that is, the intervention of the Holy Spirit to effect the transformation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. It is true, nevertheless, (1) that it occupies, in regard to the subject-matter and the logical connexion of the formulary, the exact place of the Greek *Epiclesis*; and (2) that it is also a prayer to God for His intervention in the mystery. But, whilst the Greek Liturgies use here clear and simple terms, the Roman Liturgy embodies its meaning in symbolic forms. It prays that the Angel of the Lord may take the oblation from the visible altar and bear it to the highest heaven, to the invisible altar, before the shrine of the Divine Majesty. . , . But, in both

[1] *Ib.* pp. 139—1407.

cases alike, it is after it has been brought near to, and has participated in, the Divine Virtue, that it is called the Body and Blood of Christ."

It was when the external cultus of the host became such a prominent feature of the mass, that men began to ask for a precise answer to the question, "Lord, when camest thou hither?" But as soon as it was supposed that the consecration is effected by the recital of the words of Institution, without any reference to the prayers which are to follow, the force and meaning of the clause, *Supplices te rogamus*, and the crosses which are made over the *ex hypothesi* already consecrated gifts, became matters which needed explaining, as anyone may see who will read the elaborate attempts of some Roman ritualists to explain them. And when all is said that can be said, they remain, as many candid writers of the Latin church admit them to be, difficulties "which no single explanation will meet." From the historical point of view, I believe the signing made at the words *ipsum, ipso, ipso*, etc., was a development of the usage which is indicated in Ordo Romanus I., of touching with the oblates the chalice held by the archdeacon: the words which follow were perhaps spoken after the touching of the chalice, while the oblates were being replaced on the altar. But these details do not seem very clear. There are MSS. which mark the first three crosses only—those, i.e., which are made at the words *ipsum, ipso, ipso*; and this, as well as the fact that the first three are made over the chalice, may point to a difference in the time and mode of the introduction. There is, of course, a reason why the sign should be specially associated with the words which refer to Christ: and this may account for its use in connexion with the pronouns, at a time when, or in places where, it was not yet used at the words referring to the other Persons of the Blessed Trinity.

Grancolas gives the following account of the matter: He says that the words *Per ipsum et cum ipso*, etc., are

[1] *Christian Worship*, London, 1903, pp. 181-2.

taken from the Epistle to the Romans; *ex ipso et per ipsum, et in ipso sunt omnia ipsi gloria in saecula Amen.* The priest makes the signs of the cross with the host over the chalice, outside the chalice and at the foot, since anciently they were made with the host over the new fruits or other things that they had blessed in saying *per quem haec omnia*, so that they might receive their benediction not from the prayers of the priest alone, but from Jesus Christ Himself, who was present, and also is the source of all benediction. Afterwards when these fruits ceased to be offered during mass, the benedictions or signs of the cross remained, and are made at *Per quem haec omnia*, over the host and over the chalice, and at *Per ipsum*, over the chalice and over the hosts that are on the altar (qui sont autour), with the principal host—viz., that which is intended for the communion of the priest. The five signs of the cross arise from a custom of making the sign when any Person of the Trinity is mentioned, and therefore as the Son of God is named three times, (*ipsum, ipso, ipso*), the Father once, and the Holy Spirit once, we have the reason why there are five crosses at this place.[1]

[1] *Traité de la Messe*, pp. 140-141.

THE METHOD OF CROSSING AND SOME OTHER USES OF THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

A matter which needs some consideration is the question as to how the sign of the cross should be made. Innocent III., whose book, *De Sacro Altaris Mysterio*, was probably written before he was elected to the papacy in 1198, speaks of this matter in the following words: "The sign of the cross is to be made with three fingers, because it is imprinted under the invocation of the Trinity, of which the prophet says, Who hath comprehended the dust of the earth in three fingers so that it descends from the upper part to the lower, and crosses over from the right hand to the left, because Christ came down from heaven to earth, and crossed over from the Jews to the Gentiles. Some, however, make the sign of the cross from the left to right because we ought to go from misery to glory, like as Christ also passed from death unto life, and from the place of darkness to paradise, especially so that they sign both themselves and others in one and the selfsame manner (praesertim ut seipsos et alios uno eodemque pariter modo consignent.")[1] These mystical reasons are curious, and capable of proving almost anything. We have already seen that Amalarius supposed that the sign of the cross should be made but once over the sacred elements, "because the Lord was crucified but once."

Later writers have given what they no doubt believed to be equally valuable reasons, from the mystical point of view, why the sign of the cross should be made many more times; *e.g.* Christ received five wounds, therefore

[1] *De Sacro Altaris Mysteris*, lib. ii. cap. 44, Liége, 1849, pp. 148-9.

five crosses should be made, and so on. The truth is, that mystical interpretations of ceremonial actions should never be allowed to precede an attempt to arrive at an historical solution of the problem *sub iudice*. There are as many "mystical reasons," as there are different minds.

Claude de Vert affirms that the earlier usage of blessing with three fingers only—*i.e.* with the thumb and first two fingers—is testified to by an infinite number of monuments, and by all that remain of ancient figures and images both in sculpture and painting, of bishops, priests, and abbots, all represented with the first three fingers of the right hand, elevated and separated from the others. De Vert cites the "Life of St. Gregory the Great," written by John the Deacon, who gives a portrait of that saint who is seen in the same attitude, *modus crucis in dextra*, that is to say having the right hand disposed in form of a cross. The same author, he remarks, describing in the same place the figur of St. Silvia, mother of the pope, says that she was depicted with the two fingers of the right hand extended, to make upon herself the sign of the cross.

Dom Claude, moreover, quotes the author of the book entitled *Gemma Animae* to the same effect, "We sign ourselves with three fingers," and he says that the missal of Troyes of 1580 says, "Que le Prêtre fasse les signes de croix ou bénédictions avec les trois premiers doigts joints ensemble, et que les deux autres se tiennent baissez dans la main." De Vert, however, remarks that all the people (tout le monde) have come at last to make the sign of the cross with the whole hand, except certain bishops, the Carthusian monks, and the Dominican friars, and certain other priests, secular or regular.[1] To trace the second line from left to right seemed to Dom Claude the most convenient way of making the sacred sign, although he admits that there is good authority for the contrary practice. Most English people at the present day will probably agree with the learned benedictine.

Nicolas Collin, in a treatise devoted to the sign of the

[1] *Explication des cérémonies, &c., u.s.* iii. pp. 7-9.

cross, speaks of that gesture being made with the whole of the fingers of the hand extended, and joined the one to the other, which, "according to Duranti," is intended to represent the five wounds of our Lord Jesus Christ. But certain people have, he remarks, regarded it as of no consequence whether the sign should be made with the whole hand, or with three fingers, and he quotes Innocent III, as stating that the use of the first two fingers and the thumb signify better the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Collin also says that Lucas Tudensis, in his work against the errors of the Albigenses, states that we make the sign of the cross upon us, and upon others (*i.e.* in benediction), in the name of the Holy Trinity, in holding the three fingers extended, *viz.*, the thumb and the first and second finger, and folding the other two (within the palm of the hand) to mark openly the Trinity of Persons in one divine nature. Cardinal Hosius also says the same. This, Collin says, is almost the same as had been said a long while before by Pope Leo IV, in his Homily "De cura pastorale," *viz.*, that the sign of the cross should be made by extending two fingers, namely, the index and the middle finger, and placing the thumb within and by the side of the two fingers aforesaid, to signify the Trinity. The writer, from whose work we have just quoted, refers to the sign of the cross which is made with the thumb alone, upon the book, and upon the altar. But although there are circumstances under which another rule may be observed, he thinks that generally the better and more majestic method is to make the sign with the whole hand, that is to say, holding out the five fingers of the hand, each near to its fellow.[2] In this conclusion I think the writer to be mistaken; and in the words of an old council of the Church would say in respect to such a matter, "Let ancient customs prevail."

So far as I have been able to discover, there is no authority for the opinion sometimes expressed by

[1] Nicolas Collin, *Traité du Sign de la Croix*, Paris, 1775, pp. 4, 5, 6, 7.
[2] *Ib.* p. 8.

English Church people, that there is something peculiarly "episcopal" in the use of the thumb and first two fingers, in giving the benediction at the end of the service. This notion the present writer has frequently met with, but could never draw out any reason for the statement. Still, I suppose that this tradition, having once gained a place in the popular mind, will continue to maintain it. The old maxim "magna est veritas et praevalebit," may be true in regard to the general scheme of things; but once give a ritual or ceremonial error half an hour's start, the speed of light will scarcely be able to overtake it!

There is now a ceremonial use of this sign upon which a few words may be said, *viz.*, the blessing of incense at a solemn celebration of the Eucharist. There is, I think, no room for doubt that the original intention of incense, as used in the Christian Church, was to sweeten and purify the atmosphere, and not as a sort of "offering" to the Deity. Thus, to quote the opinion of St. Thomas, "We do not use incense because of a ceremonial command of the Jewish law, but by reason of an ecclesiastical statute; therefore we do not use it in the same manner as was ordered under the old law. There are two objects for which it is employed: Firstly, out of reverence for this sacrament (of the altar), in order that any disagreeable smell, (from the number of people gathered together) in the place, that could cause any feelings of disgust, might be dispelled by its sweet odour. Secondly, in order to symbolize the effective grace with which Christ was full," &c.[1] Gavanti gives amongst other reasons for the use of incense, "ad reverentiam loci ut malus odor inde pellatur concurrentis populi." In a benediction used at the time of Charlemagne, the following words are found: "Hoc incensum ad omnem putorem nocuum extinquendum Dominus benedicat, et in odorem suavitatis suae accendat. Per."[2] Now the earlier use of the Christian Church was not to bless the incense at all

[1] *Summa Theol*, III., q. 83., v. ad 2[m].

[2] Martene, *De Antiq. Eccles. Rit.* lib. I. cap. iv. art. xii. p. 191.

since in primitive times it was considered as preparatory to worship, rather than a part of the Church's worship itself. It was not supposed to be an act of worship to burn incense in church. But in later ages incense came to be looked upon as a kind of sacrifice offered to the Deity, "species latrie que est cultus soli deo debitus," as Lindewode expresses it. From this idea arose the opinion that the incense used at the altar ought to be blessed, and that that which had received the benediction of the priest should be reserved solely for censing the altar, and not employed for other purposes.

De Vert, however, has made the following observation upon the historical side of the question: "C'estroit proprement la fumigation ou suffumigation des anciens, nécessaire sur tout dans les Eglises ou Basiliques, à cause de la mauvaise odeur, inséparable de la grande multitude de peuple qui s'y essemble."[1] Thus, there is no benediction of incense given in the Mozarabic Missal, though there is a rubric which states that the priest may use it, "if he will." Anciently in the Ambrosian rite, the incense was not blessed; neither is a blessing found in the York and Hereford Mass books, except when the new fire is blessed on Easter Eve. De Vert says of the Carthusian monks that "se contentant de mettre simplement l'encens dans l'encenssoir, sans accompagner même cette action, ni de prieres ni de signes de croix, en un mot sans benir l'encens. Seulement a l'encencement de l'oblation, ils disent ces mots, attirez par l'encens même, comme l'on voit; *Dirigatur Domine, oratio mea sicut incensum, in conspectu tuo.*"[2] In the use of Sarum there was a blessing of incense: "Ab ipso benedicatur in cujus honore cremabitur. In nomine Patris," &c.[3] In Rome, incense was only used at the entry of the Sacred Ministers, and during the Gospel procession, at the time when the third *Ordo* was drawn up, which was probably towards the end of the tenth century, and perhaps later. It seems, then, that to bless the incense with the sign of

[1] *Explication u.s.* t. iv. p. 50.
[2] *Ib. u.s.* p. 55.
[3] *Missale Sarum, u.s.* p. 581.

the cross, in places where this ceremony is used in the ancient way, is perhaps a mistake. If the view of St. Thomas be the true one, and he is followed by many eminent ritualists, there seems no valid reason why the incense should be blessed at all. For it is easy to perceive the *raison d'être* of the blessing, when incense is supposed to be a sort of sacrifice offered to God. This, however, is a comparatively modern idea in the Christian Church, and is decidedly non-Christian in its origin.

It remains to consider the use of the Sign of the Cross in regard to the benediction of persons, viz.—the blessing of the people by the priest, and the places where the celebrant is directed to bless himself. First, in regard to absolution, (the *Misereatur* and *Indulgentiam* of the Latin service books). Grancolas notes that at the words *Tribuat vobis omnipotens*, the priest makes the sign of the cross, because they were anciently followed by *In nomine Patris et Filii* and which were usually accompanied by this sign; and moreover, on Maundy Thursday, when the bishop absolves the penitents he does not make the sign of the cross during *Indulgentiam* but at the words which follow, and with which the absolution ends, *Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus Pater et Filius and Spiritus Sanctus.*[1] In the uses of Sarum, Hereford, and York, there is no direction for the priest to sign either himself or the people. In the "Use of Bangor," as given in Maskell's "Ancient Liturgies of the Church of England," (p. 12), the following rubric occurs:—Misereatur, *et tunc ministri respondeant:* Amen. *Deinde erectus signet se in facie dicendo absolutionem.*" The Roman rubric runs, "Misereatur vestri &c. *Signat se signo crucis dicens*: Indulgentiam."[2] There is thus no English authority for the priest signing the people during the absolution in the office of Holy Communion, and, as has been seen, the English rubrics, with the single exception of the "Bangor" book, do not direct

[1] *Traité de la messe, u.s.* p. 9.
[2] *Missale Romanum*, Turin, 1874, p. 149.

any personal signation of the priest himself. Such being the case, it was natural that this gesture should have been forbidden in the "Lincoln Judgment."[1]

The three places during the mass where the sign of the cross was ordered to be publicly made in our ancient rites were (1) at the end of the *Gloria in excelsis* (2) at the *Gloria tibi* (and not *before* it) preceding the Gospel, and (3) at the *Benedictus qui venit* after the *Sanctus.*

Referring to the first mentioned, Grancolas says that at the words *Cum sancto spiritu in gloria Dei Patris*, the sign of the cross is made because of the name of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity.[2] In announcing the Gospel, the Sarum rubric is as follows: *Cum autem inceperit evangelium post* Dominus vobiscum *faciat signum crucis super librum : deinde in sua fronte, et postea in pectore cum pollice.* Evangelium Secundum N. The Hereford rubric reads, *Tunc faciendo crucem super librum cum dextro pollice dicat*: Sequentia &c. *et signet seipsum in fronte cum eodem pollice dicens* secundum N. In the Roman Mass-book, after the direction to the priest to sign with the thumb of his right hand upon the beginning of the gospel which is to be read, he is ordered to sign himself *in fronte, ore, et pectore.*[3] So far as I can discover, the Lincoln rule alone can be quoted as an English precedent for the priest signing himself at the end of *Credo in unum deum.* The Roman rubric reads, *In fine ad* et vitam venturi saeculi, *signat se signo crucis a fronte ad pectus.*

Provost Staley has stated that in some German missals, a cross is printed between the words *homo factus est* and *Crucifixus*, but not later in the creed.[4]

Grancolas cites Rufinus as stating that in the church of Acquileia, at the words of the creed, *Hujus carnis resurrectionem*, the sign of the cross was made upon the forehead because of the demonstrative *hujus*, and so

[1] *Read and others* v. *the Lord Bishop of Lincoln*, London, 1899, p. 84.
[2] *Traité de la messe, u. s.* p. 24,
[3] Maskell *u.s.* pp. 47-8.
[4] *Studies in Ceremonial*, Oxford, 1901, pp. 41-2.

to mark the part referred to, viz. the body, flesh; and it is perhaps for this reason that the signing at the end of the creed has arisen, since it anciently terminated with the article concerning the resurrection.[1] Rufinus's creed evidently ended with the 11th article. 'Sed et ultimus iste sermo, qui *Resurrectionem carnis* prœnuntiat, Summam totius perfectionis succinta brevitate concludit.'[2]

The sign of the cross was made at Sarum at the end of the *Benedictus.* "*Dum Sacerdos dicit* Sanctus, Sanctus, *erigat parumper brachia sua, et jungat manus suas usque ad haec verba* in nomine domini; *tunc semper signet se in facie sua.*[3] This signing is an ancient custom. Grancolas says that it is made to mark the fact that by his death and passion Jesus Christ is the source of all blessing.[4] According to the use of Sarum the priest signed himself before communicating: Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi sit mihi peccatori via et vita, in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti, amen. *Hic sumat corpus, cruce prius facta cum ipso corpore ante os.* The signing took place, at the reception of the chalice, in saying the words "In no✠mine Patris" &c.[5] The York rubric reads, *Hic sumat cruce prius facta cum ipso corpore ante: deinde ad sanguinem dicens.*[6] There is, however, no direction to make the sign of the cross at this moment, in MSS. B. and C., nor in the MS. York breviary, collated by Henderson.[7] The Roman rubric reads, *Postea dextera se signans cum Hostia super Patenam, dicit:* Corpus, &c.

There is a very early use of what may perhaps be considered the sign of the cross at the reception of the Lord's body, referred to by St. Cyril of Jerusalem: "When you draw near, do not come with your palms wide open, or your fingers apart, but make your left

[1] *Traité de la messe, u.s.* p. 68.
[2] Charles Heurtley, *Harmonia Symbolica* Oxford 1858 p. 30. But see note on last page.
[3] *Missale Sarum u.s.* col. 610.
[4] *Traité de la messe,* p. 102.
[5] *Missale Sarum u.s.* col. 626.
[6] *Missale Ebor: u.s.* p. 200.
[7] *Ib.* p. 201.

hand a support for your right, as about to receive a King, etc."[1] But it does not seem to have been so much the idea of crossing the hands, as of making a sort of "throne" of them, that was in St Cyril's mind.

The last use of the Sign to be considered, is that which was made at the Blessing of the people at the conclusion of mass. It will be remembered that this was one of the ceremonial questions dealt with in the Lincoln Judgment, where it was decided that there was no justification for this ceremony from English custom.[2] But, as Mr. Cuthbert Atchley has shown, "there is abundant evidence for the use of the blessing after Mass, and making the Sign of the Cross over the people, long before 1549."[3] In a poem call "The Pricke of Conscience," written in the first half of the 14th Century, it is said that there are certain things which cleanse from venial sin, one of them being :

> Benison of priest that given is,
> Namely in the end of the Mass.[4]

In the "Praeparatio ad Missam" given in the "Officium Eveshamensis Abbatis"[5] the following dircction occurs: *Post orationem* Placeat tibi. *sumpto baculo vertat se ad populum et det* Benedictionem *ut supra ad Vesperas* The place referred to in the above rubric will be found in col. 4.—*Deinde erigat manum signando populum dicens* Benedicat nos *(sic)* omnipotens deus pater et filius et spiritus sanctus. In Langforde's "Meditations for Ghostly Exercise in the time of Mass," we find the following: "After Ite missa est, the prest stondeith in the mydes of the Awter and so blyssyd the people."[6] In the "Myrroure of Oure Ladye" we are told that "It ys commaunded in the lawe of holy Chyrche that on feasteful dayes when people are bounde to here dyvyne servyce that they go nat from the Masse tyl yt be ended

[1] *Catech. Mys :* V. *c.* xviii. p. 300.
[2] *u.s.* p. 84.
[3] *Essays on ceremonial* by Various Authors, London 1904 p. 29.
[4] Hampole's *Pricke of conscience*, ed. Morris, Berlin, 1863, p. 93.
[5] Ed. H. A. Wilson, H. B. S. 1893 col. 16.
[6] *Tracts on the Mass*, ed. Dr. J. Wickham Legg, p. 28.

and tyl they have in the ende of the masse the prestes blyssynge. For every preste may blysse the peple in the end of Masse yf there be no bysshop presente that wyl blesse"[1] In the "Book of Ceremonies," written by an unknown author, and apparently for the use of King Henry VIII, we read that "The Priest giveth at the departure, sometime, the benediction in the name of the whole Trinity, signifying that last benediction which Christ gave to his disciples in the Mount of Olivet, when he ascended to his Father."[2] Thomas Becon is a writer one scarcely likes to quote, but he testifies to this practice *more suo*—"Ye. . . . afterwards bless the people with an empty Cup, . . . at your high and solemn Mass."[3] Again, (p. 392), "Now blessing the people either with his fingers, or with an empty Cup." But it is needless to multiply citations: enough has been said to show that Archbishop Benson's Court could scarcely have weighed all the evidence when it affirmed that "there is no justification either in direction or usage for making the sign of the cross in giving the final Benediction," and that "the action is a distinct ceremony, not 'retained,' since it had not previously existed."[4] Grancolas says of this signing, "Les simples Prêtres donnoient ordinairement le benediction, même aux messes basses, en faisant trois signes de croix sur le peuple, l'un au milieu, et les deux autres aux deux côtez, de la meme maniere qu'ils salüent le peuple lors qu'ils prêchent: les Evêques font encore trois signes de croix sur chaque personne lors qu'ils donnent la bénédiction."[5]

[1] Early English Text Society, 1873, pp. 231-2.
[2] Strype *Eccles. Mem.*, Oxford 1822, vol. I. pt. 2. pp. 426-7
[3] *Prayers &c.*, Parker Society, Cambridge, 1844, p. 268.
[4] p. 87.
[5] *Traité, u.s.* p. 183-4.

NOTE I.

There is a peculiar use of the sign of the cross in the Mozarabic Rite. At the "fraction" the host is broken into nine parts, the celebrant arranging seven of them in the form of a cross, and the two others at the right side. During this ritual moment the choir sing the Nicene Creed.

The seven portions of the host which form the cross, are intended to represent the Incarnation, Nativity, Circumcision, Epiphany, Passion, Death, and Resurrection of our Saviour; the two particles placed at the side import the Glory and the Kingdom, thus forming no part of the cross, since they refer to that which is subsequent to it.[1]

The meaning of this ceremony seems to be the setting forth, by a symbolic action, of the various stages of that Divine Act by which we have been redeemed. It may therefore be compared with the terms of the "great Intercession" in the Eastern Rites. There is a custom which I am told is observed in certain places in Scotland, of the priest laying his hands—the one crossed over the other—upon the oblations to be consecrated, during the recital of the words of Institution, and sometimes also during the Invocation.

[1] *Missale Gothicum*, (*i.e.* Mozarabicum) Rome, 1804, col. 563-4.

NOTE II.

In reference to Grancolas citation of the creed of Aquileia, it should be noted, however, that Rufinus is not dealing with the *Credo in unum Deum*, but of an early form of that which we now call the Apostles' Creed. His words are: "'*Hujus.*' Ita fit ut unicuique animae non confusum aut extraneum corpus, sed suum quod habuerat reparetur; ut consequenter possit pro agonibus praesentis vitae cum anima sua caro vel pudica coronari, vel impudica puniri. Et ideo satis cauta & provida adjectione, fidem Symboli Ecclesia nostra elocet, quae in eo quod a caeteris traditur, 'Carnis resurrectionem,' uno addito pronomine tradit, '*Hujus* carnis resurrectionem,' hujus sinc dubio quam is qui profitetur signaculo crucis fronti imposito contingit," quoted in *Harmonia Symbolica*, by C. A. Heurtley, D.D., Oxford, 1858.

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